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20 April 1966

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE BULLETIN

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*Vietnam: (Information as of 4:30 AM EST)

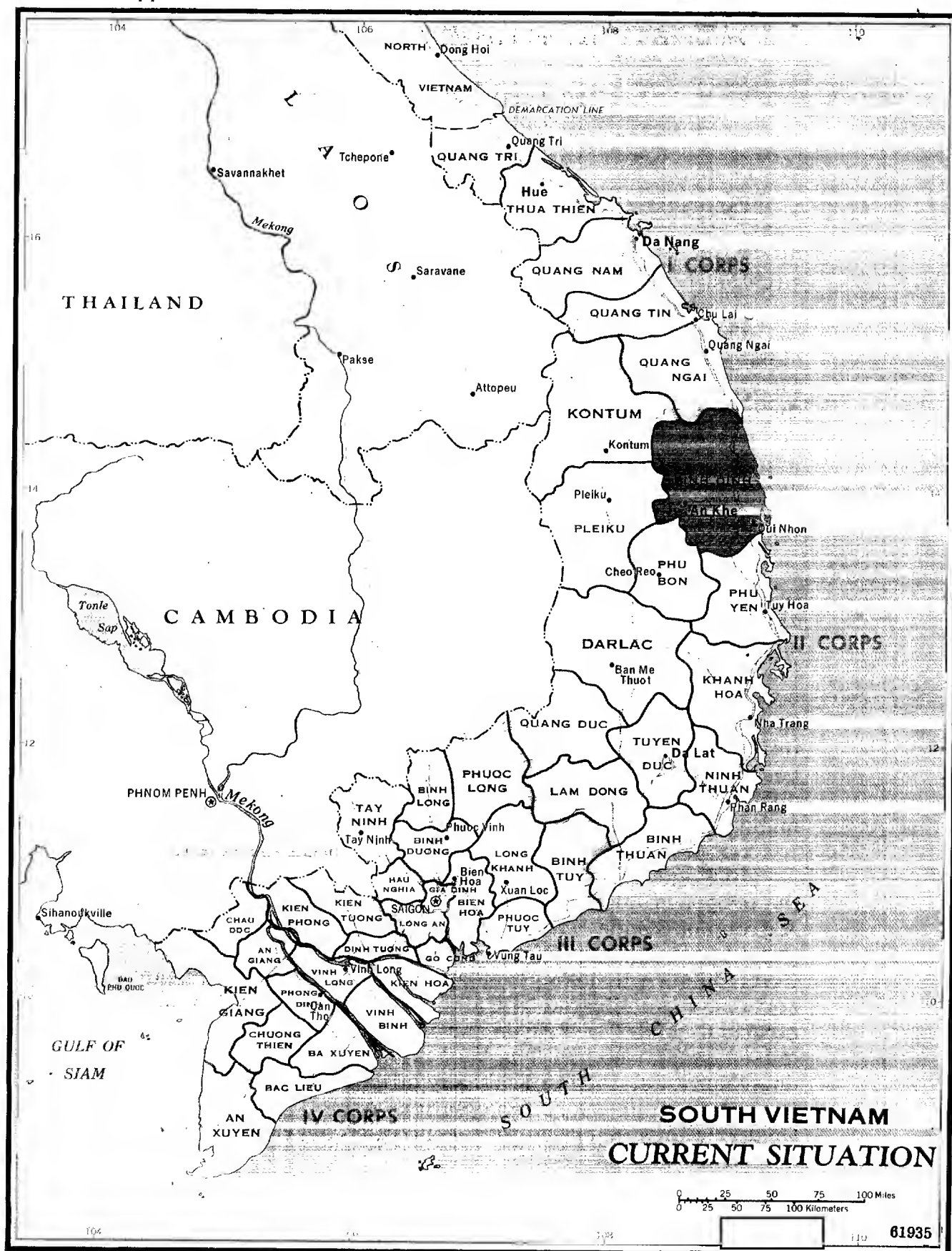
Political Developments in South Vietnam: The situation remains generally quiet, but uneasy.

There have been further indications that Buddhist elements in Hue are lining up behind Tri Quang's call for an end to protest activity, but Da Nang circles continue to demand the government's replacement. Bar-ricades put up to block the entry of any Saigon troops into Da Nang are being removed, however, and local "struggle" authorities have agreed to release several political detainees, including the province chief.

Scattered acts of violence were reported yesterday in various I Corps towns. The danger of a serious clash between anti-government student "suicide troops" and armed followers of the Vietnamese Nationalist (VNQDD) Party, many of them pro-government rural construction cadres, has not entirely vanished. In II Corps, local authorities are still not coping successfully with unrest in Da Lat. [The situation may have been aggravated by the corps commander's reported difficulties in asserting discipline in his chain of command.]

In Saigon, there are signs of growing concern over the proposed August elections for a constituent assembly. A group of Saigon University law professors has suggested postponement of the assembly for fear that the Communists will take advantage of the election. Similar concern was indicated by Catholics in a weekend demonstration. Mai Tho Truyen, an influential southern Buddhist layman who has long been estranged from the Buddhist Institute, told an Embassy officer yesterday that the only real pressure for elections came from Tri Quang, whose objective is to control a government from behind the scenes.

(continued)



The Military Situation in South Vietnam: The only significant enemy contact reported during the past 24 hours from any of the 25 operations, battalion-sized or larger, currently being conducted by South Vietnamese and allied forces, was in Binh Dinh Province where South Korean troops in operation SU BOK killed 32 Viet Cong and captured five. Korean casualties were four killed and 24 wounded.

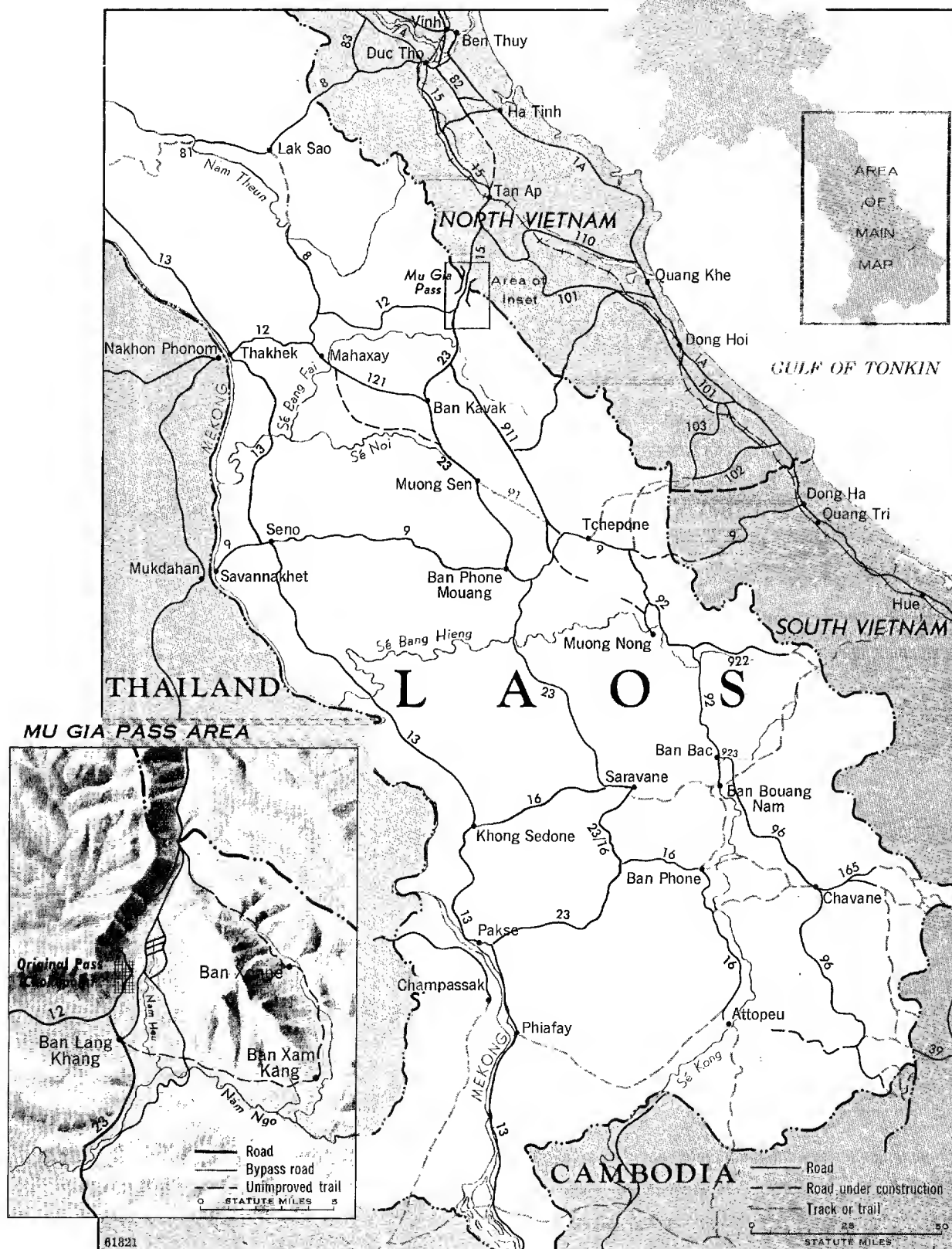
In the third assault within a week on a US air strip, the Viet Cong early today hit An Khe airfield, base of the US 1st Air Cavalry Division, with six mortar rounds and small arms fire. A sabotage team of 12 to 15 men was infiltrated at the same time. Two C-130 Hercules aircraft and a Quonset hut were damaged by explosive charges, but no US casualties have been reported. The Viet Cong were fired on as they withdrew, but enemy losses are unknown.

During the night of 18-19 April, an estimated platoon of Viet Cong tried to penetrate the defensive perimeter of a US Marine artillery battery five miles northwest of Da Nang. A second Marine battery position 900 yards away was simultaneously shelled with 35 rounds of 60-mm. mortar fire. US casualties totaled six killed and 29 wounded. One 105-mm. artillery piece and one ammunition bunker were destroyed, and two 105-mm. artillery pieces were damaged. Enemy losses have been reported as 11 killed.

The US military command in South Vietnam feels that the over-all pattern of enemy activity during the present period of political unrest in the country is suggestive of regrouping, retraining, and preparation for future large-scale operations. There continue to be indications of impending Viet Cong attacks in the general area extending northwest from Saigon to the Cambodian border, and in the northernmost part of the country. In the northern region, certain recent Communist activities and posture may presage major offensive operations in the area around Da Nang.

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THE LAOS PANHANDLE



Laos: US air operations against Communist supply activity in southern Laos appear to be increasingly effective.

During the past seven weeks US attack pilots claim to have destroyed about 300 Communist trucks in the Laos panhandle and damaged an additional 300. This total, which exceeds the number of trucks destroyed and damaged in the previous four-month period, reflects the widespread and effective use of low-altitude spotting and forward-air-control aircraft.

These losses--substantial even allowing for unavoidable pilot error--have coincided with at least a temporary reduction in the flow of trucks through the corridor area.

March and early April southbound traffic along Routes 23 and 911 has dropped off considerably from the December-January daily average of 25-30 trucks.

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India-Pakistan: India and Pakistan are increasingly critical of each other's alleged failure to co-operate in reducing tensions.

Among the provisions of the Tashkent Agreement of last January was one providing for continuing high-level meetings between the two governments. No meeting has been held since an unproductive joint ministerial meeting in early March, however, ^{and the next move} ~~and the next move~~ ^{is apparently} ~~is apparently~~ ^{up to} ~~up to~~ ^{Rawalpindi} ~~Rawalpindi~~. ^{Meaning to} ~~Meaning to~~ Indians claim the next move is up to Rawalpindi. ^{Rawalpindi} ~~Rawalpindi~~ while, the Pakistanis complain that spokesmen in New Delhi have become increasingly adamant in their refusal even to contemplate a change in the status of Kashmir.

^{Presumably use} Indian leaders ~~have indicated~~ ^{are} concerned at statements Chinese Communist leaders made during their recent state visit to East Pakistan pledging continued solidarity with Pakistan against any new "aggression." The public display by the Pakistanis of Chinese military equipment and Pakistani press stories alleging that Chinese warnings prevented an Indian attack on East Pakistan last autumn are also causing an unfavorable reaction in New Delhi.

There have been occasional conciliatory moves, such as Mrs. Gandhi's 19 April statement that she would be willing to meet President Ayub and the latter's repeated emphasis in his speeches on the need for peace between the two countries. However, these are subject to continuing and usually countervailing internal political pressures.

The Indian Government recently came under fire in parliament from both opposition and government deputies for withdrawing troops from three small salients along the West Pakistan border. Similarly, in Pakistan Ayub is still being pressed to prove that the Tashkent Agreement was not a sellout of Pakistani claims in Kashmir.

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Kenya: President Kenyatta warned the Soviet and Chinese Communist ambassadors last weekend that he would sever diplomatic relations if they continue to provide assistance to former vice president Odinga, who left the government to organize an opposition party. According to a high Kenyan official, Kenyatta told the Soviet ambassador that he would also hold him responsible for such activity by Eastern European embassies. The official believes that the Soviets, who have curtailed their clandestine contacts since the ouster of several bloc personnel last month, will heed the warning, but that the Chinese will probably continue to finance Odinga through their embassy in Tanzania.

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Guinea: President Touré has moderated the extreme position he took following the February coup in Ghana. The majority of Touré's advisers apparently have convinced him that Guinea was becoming dangerously isolated in Africa, that hopes of extensive new Soviet support were unrealistic, and that US aid should not be jeopardized. On 16 April the top leaders of Guinea's single party unanimously endorsed a letter from Touré to President Johnson affirming a desire to strengthen relations with the US, and the political prestige in Conakry of the pro-Western Guinean ambassador to the US appears greatly enhanced.

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Executive Offices of the White House

Special Counsel to the President

The Special Assistant for National Security Affairs

The Scientific Adviser to the President

The Director of the Budget

The Department of State

The Secretary of State

The Under Secretary of State

The Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs

The Deputy Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs

The Counselor and Chairman of the Policy Planning Council

The Director of Intelligence and Research

The Treasury Department

The Secretary of the Treasury

The Under Secretary of the Treasury

The Department of Defense

The Secretary of Defense

The Deputy Secretary of Defense

The Secretary of the Army

The Secretary of the Navy

The Secretary of the Air Force

The Assistant Secretary of Defense (International Security Affairs)

The Chairman, The Joint Chiefs of Staff

Chief of Naval Operations, United States Navy

Chief of Staff, United States Air Force

Chief of Staff, United States Army

Commandant, United States Marine Corps

U.S. Rep., Military Committee and Standing Group, NATO

Supreme Allied Commander, Europe

Commander in Chief, Pacific

Commander in Chief, Atlantic

The Director, Defense Intelligence Agency

The Director, The Joint Staff

The Assistant Chief of Staff for Intelligence, Department of Army

The Director of Naval Intelligence, Department of Navy

The Assistant Chief of Staff, Intelligence, Department of the Air Force

The Department of Justice

The Attorney General

The Federal Bureau of Investigation

The Director

National Aeronautics and Space Administration

The Administrator

The Atomic Energy Commission

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The National Security Agency

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The United States Information Agency

The Director

The National Indications Center

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